

Departments of Education and Health and Human Services that offers educators and early childhood providers information, strategies, and tools to successfully involve more fathers in their children's learning—from encouraging more fathers to read with their kids at home to inviting more of them to volunteer in schools and child care centers.

The report highlights model programs around the country and provides resource information for practitioners. We also know that noncustodial parents who continue to be involved with their children are more likely to pay child support. The sad fact is that one in three children in America today lives without his or her father. They shouldn't be punished, either emotionally or financially, because of that. That's why for 7½ years now we've made child support enforcement a top priority.

And today we've got some further evidence that our efforts are paying off. Child support collections increased 10 percent during the past year, reaching a record of nearly \$16 billion. That's double what it was in 1992. This means fewer women on welfare, fewer children in poverty, more families living in dignity.

When it comes to protecting children and building strong families and strong communities, all of us have a role to play. But first and foremost, it's about caring mothers and fathers; and then about supporting community. But Government also must do its part. And we mustn't forget that most fathers out there really do want to do a good job. That's why today I'm also directing a number of departments to develop coordinated, interagency guidance to help States and communities identify and use available Federal resources and opportunities for promoting responsible fatherhood.

The research and the results are clear: supporting, responsible fatherhood is good for children, good for families, good for our Nation. It's why we propose building on our progress with a \$255 million responsible fatherhood initiative called "Fathers Work/Families Win." The fact is, many fathers can't provide financial and emotional support to their children, not because they're deadbeat, but because they're dead-broke.

Our initiative would help at least 40,000 more low income fathers work and support their children. Unfortunately, in the spending bill passed in the House this week, the Congress turned its back on this challenge by not including any money for this important initiative. So I ask Congress to work with me across party lines to pass a budget that makes sure more fathers can live up to their responsibility. Working together, we can help fathers better fulfill the emotional, educational, and financial needs of their children.

As we prepare to celebrate the first Father's Day of the new century, let's do all we can to help more fathers live up to that title, not just through their financial support, but also by becoming more active, loving participants in their children's lives.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:15 a.m. on June 16 in Classroom 230 at Joseph C. Lanzetta School (Public School 96) in New York City for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 17. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 16 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Memorandum on Joint Guidance on Supporting Responsible Fatherhood Efforts

June 16, 2000

Memorandum for the Attorney General, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the Secretary of Education

Subject: Joint Guidance on Supporting Responsible Fatherhood Efforts

One of the fundamental goals of my Administration has been to strengthen fathers' involvement in their children's lives. In support of that goal, I directed all executive departments and agencies to review their policies, programs, and initiatives to ensure that they supported men in their role as fathers. The review concluded that the Federal Government can play an important role by providing coordinated guidance and resources

that support responsible fatherhood to individuals and State and local governments.

Under the leadership of Vice President Gore, my Administration has made significant progress in promoting greater father involvement, within the Federal workforce as well as through Federal programs and resources, and through partnerships with States and communities, foundations, and the research community.

As you know, my Budget for Fiscal Year 2001 substantially expands our efforts to promote responsible fatherhood and strengthen families. The Budget proposes \$255 million for the first year of a new "Fathers Work/Families Win" initiative to promote responsible fatherhood and support working families, allows States to simplify child support distribution rules, provides incentives to States that pass through more child support payments directly to families, and extends Welfare-to-Work grants to help noncustodial parents move into lasting unsubsidized jobs. In addition, my Budget proposes to increase the Earned Income Tax Credit by nearly \$24 billion over 10 years, providing an additional work incentive of as much as \$1,200 in tax relief to an estimated 6.8 million hard-working mothers and fathers.

Recent research indicates that promoting and rewarding work for low-income families can support marital stability, increase employment and earnings, reduce domestic violence, and improve children's behavior and school performance. In addition, research confirms that child support is an important factor in lifting children out of poverty. There is also evidence that a large proportion of unmarried fathers are involved with their children at birth, but that these relationships tend to weaken over time. And employed fathers are more likely to be able to support their children financially and emotionally.

These results, as well as the 1995 review, show the importance of providing Federal guidance and resources to States that can support responsible fatherhood, work, and family. Therefore, I direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in conjunction with the Secretaries of Labor, Agriculture, Education, Housing and Urban Development, and the Attorney General, to develop and provide, within 90 days of the date of

this memorandum, coordinated guidance on Federal resources and opportunities for promoting responsible fatherhood.

This guidance should:

- (1) clearly identify existing resources available, including Federal welfare reform block grant funds, Welfare-to-Work and workforce development resources, educational resources, paternity establishment and child support, Food Stamp Employment and Training, and low-income housing and community development funds;
- (2) help States, local governments, community- and faith-based organizations, fatherhood practitioners, and families, identify and use Federal resources and opportunities to strengthen the many roles of fathers in families;
- (3) clarify the extent to which existing policies and practices, including child support policies, can be modified to help ensure available resources effectively serve lower-income fathers;
- (4) identify opportunities to build on and sustain the involvement of fathers in low-income, unmarried parent, "fragile families"; and
- (5) list contact information to help interested parties access information on a regular basis.

This guidance should be accessible, and made available through the websites of Federal agencies, as well as in printed form.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 16 but was embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m. on June 17. An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Statement on the Anniversary of the Geneva Protocol of 1925

June 17, 2000

Seventy-five years ago today, June 17, 1925, the international community took a major step toward protecting the world from the dangers of weapons of mass destruction by concluding the Geneva Protocol of 1925.